LAHORE: One of the grounds in Iqbal Park, which is being used as parking lot for inter-city buses and coaches.— Dawn

Sports on way out

Transporters' squeeze on Iqbal Parks

By Our Sports Correspondent

LAHORE, Dec 31: The Iqbal Parks, one of the biggest sports complexes of the sub-continent, has recently lost its attraction as a sports and recreational centre as parking of buses and noise and air pollution caused by smoke-emitting vehicles has made sports activities extremely difficult.

Most of the Iqbal Parks Sports Complex grounds are getting damaged as transporters have started parking their buses there after adjacent stands at Badami Bagh, where the whole inter-city transport has recently been shifted, have fallen short of space to accommodate them.

Around 200 buses are seen parked all the time at one of the Iqbal Parks grounds. Drivers use different gates of the complex and keep moving the buses over grassy plots of various grounds, causing substantial damage.

This has affected the people who have been using these grounds for morning walk for years. Sportsmen from the adjacent Walled City, who have only this park left for their activities, are also finding carrying on their sports extremely difficult under the circumstances.

The Iqbal Parks Sports Complex is under the administration of the Punjab Sports Board which manages a number of grounds for cricket, hockey and football. The local administration has not sought permission from - even informed the Board - before allowing transporters to use the complex for parking buses.

A Punjab Sports Board spokesman told *Dawn* that PSB chairman Chaudhary Akhtar Rasool was going to lodge a written protest with the Lahore commissioner against the encroachment.

According to the spokesman, the grounds were recently upgraded at a heavy cost and transporters have already damaged them substantially.

The Minar-i-Pakistan has also been badly hit by the presence of thousands of buses whose noise and smoke is a perpetual source of irritation for people who visit the place for recreation.

Besides the General Bus Stand at Badami Bagh, buses which leave Lahore for upcountry usually stand at the nearby Azadi Chowk blowing the horns round-the-clock.